



# Southwestern Idaho News

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

February's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Boise-Nampa Metropolitan Statistical Area declined a tenth to 2.5 percent, marking the third straight month of declining unemployment in the metropolitan area. This extremely low unemployment rate is a boon to job seekers, who are seeing opportunities expand, pay increase and benefits improve as employers compete for qualified workers. Unemployment is almost like a double-edged sword for employers. A good economy means more business but a harder time finding the workers to handle the increased workload. Many area employers, as a result, are turning to employee referral recruitment programs and other nontraditional recruiting techniques to find new workers.

Total nonfarm jobs increased by 0.9 percent, or 2,400 jobs, from January to February for a total of 273,800. February saw the return of many jobs, mostly in public and private education after the seasonal holiday drop, and was a good

	Civilian Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Percent Unemployed	Number Employed
<b>Ada</b>	198,017	4,546	2.3	193,471
<b>Adams</b>	2,060	102	4.9	1,958
<b>Boise</b>	3,381	98	2.9	3,283
<b>Canyon</b>	82,899	2,529	3.1	80,371
<b>Elmore</b>	10,469	349	3.3	10,120
<b>Gem</b>	7,809	249	3.2	7,560
<b>Owyhee</b>	5,378	89	1.7	5,289
<b>Payette</b>	10,416	407	3.9	10,010
<b>Valley</b>	4,976	177	3.5	4,799
<b>Washington</b>	5,197	186	3.6	5,011
<b>Statewide</b>	753,976	21,242	2.8	732,734

**Southwestern Idaho Table 1: Boise City-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment (Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties)**

	Feb 2007*	Jan 2007	Feb 2006	% Change	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	297,500	298,700	288,500	-0.4	3.1
Unemployment	7,500	7,800	9,300	-3.8	-19.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.5	2.6	3.2		
Total Employment	290,000	290,900	279,200	-0.3	3.9
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	298,700	299,000	291,900	-0.1	2.3
Unemployment	9,300	10,500	11,100	-11.4	-16.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.1	3.5	3.8		
Total Employment	289,400	288,500	280,800	0.3	3.1
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	273,800	271,400	260,800	0.9	5.0
<b>GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES</b>					
<i>Natural Resources &amp; Construction</i>	23,800	23,800	22,100	0.0	7.7
Construction	23,500	23,500	21,800	0.0	7.8
<i>Manufacturing</i>	32,000	32,000	30,200	0.0	6.0
Durable Goods	26,000	25,900	23,900	0.4	8.8
Wood Product Manufacturing	2,600	2,600	2,600	0.0	0.0
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	1,500	1,500	1,500	0.0	0.0
Machinery Manufacturing	1,300	1,200	1,200	8.3	8.3
Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	15,400	15,300	14,100	0.7	9.2
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	2,300	2,200	2,000	4.5	15.0
Other Durable Goods	2,900	3,100	2,500	-6.5	16.0
Nondurable Goods	6,000	6,100	6,300	-1.6	-4.8
Food Manufacturing	4,300	4,300	4,400	0.0	-2.3
Printing & Related Support Activities	700	700	700	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	1,000	1,100	1,200	-9.1	-16.7
<b>SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES</b>					
<i>Trade, Transportation, &amp; Utilities</i>	52,500	53,100	49,800	-1.1	5.4
Trade	45,000	45,500	42,700	-1.1	5.4
Wholesale Trade	12,000	12,100	12,100	-0.8	-0.8
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	6,800	6,900	7,200	-1.4	-5.6
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	3,600	3,600	3,600	0.0	0.0
Retail Trade	33,000	33,400	30,600	-1.2	7.8
Food & Beverage Stores	4,300	4,400	4,400	-2.3	-2.3
General Merchandise Stores	7,100	7,200	6,100	-1.4	16.4
All Other Retail Trade	21,600	21,800	20,100	-0.9	7.5
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	7,500	7,600	7,100	-1.3	5.6
Utilities	700	700	600	0.0	16.7
Transportation & Warehousing	6,800	6,900	6,500	-1.4	4.6
<i>Information</i>	4,700	4,600	5,500	2.2	-14.5
Telecommunications	1,500	1,500	2,400	0.0	-37.5
<i>Financial Activities</i>	15,000	15,100	14,100	-0.7	6.4
Finance & Insurance	10,700	10,700	10,100	0.0	5.9
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	4,300	4,400	4,000	-2.3	7.5
<i>Professional &amp; Business Services</i>	39,500	39,000	37,300	1.3	5.9
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	11,900	11,800	11,500	0.8	3.5
Management of Companies & Ent.	5,600	5,600	5,800	0.0	-3.4
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	22,000	21,600	20,000	1.9	10.0
<b>Educational &amp; Health Services</b>					
Educational Services	32,200	31,900	32,500	0.9	-0.9
Educational Services	2,600	2,300	3,700	13.0	-29.7
Health Care & Social Assistance	29,600	29,600	28,800	0.0	2.8
Hospitals	9,700	9,700	9,300	0.0	4.3
<b>Leisure &amp; Hospitality</b>					
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	23,600	23,500	22,400	0.4	5.4
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	2,900	2,900	2,900	0.0	0.0
Accommodation & Food Services	20,700	20,600	19,500	0.5	6.2
Accommodation	2,400	2,300	2,200	4.3	9.1
Food Services & Drinking Places	18,300	18,300	17,300	0.0	5.8
<b>Other Services</b>					
Other Services	7,700	7,700	6,500	0.0	18.5
<b>Total Government</b>					
Total Government	42,800	40,700	40,400	5.2	5.9
Federal Government	5,500	5,500	5,500	0.0	0.0
State & Local Government	37,300	35,200	34,900	6.0	6.9
State Government	13,800	12,000	13,600	15.0	1.5
State Government Education	4,600	2,900	4,900	58.6	-6.1
State Government Administration	9,200	9,100	8,700	1.1	5.7
Local Government	23,500	23,200	21,300	1.3	10.3
Local Government Education	15,200	14,900	13,300	2.0	14.3
Local Government Administration	8,300	8,300	8,000	0.0	3.8

\* Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

month for job retention in construction, where jobs were steady from January. Durable goods manufacturing added 100 jobs, but the service sector was the big gainer in February with professional and business services leading the way. From February 2006 to February 2007 the metropolitan economy created 13,000 jobs, a 5 percent increase that spanned nearly every industry sector. Notably manufacturing grew by 6 percent over the 12 months. Construction was up 7.8 percent, administrative support 10 percent and retail trade 7.8 percent. February's civilian labor force and total employment figures for all 10 counties in southwestern Idaho are shown in Table 2 on page 13.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### BOISE METROPOLITAN AREA

- The growth in the western part of the metropolitan area is drawing national retailers and restaurants to Canyon County. One of the newest opening in April is the Olive Garden in the Treasure Valley Marketplace in Nampa. Kohl's department store opened a store this month near the Treasure Valley Marketplace.
- The Dressbarn, also a nationally known retailer, and Cost Plus both opened in mid-March, Famous Footwear and Maurices also opened in March.
- The former Simplot Co. ethanol plant in Caldwell that has been empty since October 2004 has been reopened by London-based ED&F Man Holdings Limited. Idaho Ethanol Processing LLC has 14 workers producing ethanol from potato waste.
- The city of Caldwell is gearing up for future growth with an \$8 million upgrade to its sewer system that includes new lines and a new pump station. The Caldwell East Urban Development Agency is financing the project. There are approximately 2,000 new homes already in the service area. The system is being beefed up to handle 9,000 more homes.
- Over the next two months, ExpressJet Airline will start offering nonstop flights from Boise to San Diego and Ontario, Calif. ExpressJet began offering flights to Ontario in April. San Diego flights are scheduled to start in mid-May.
- An \$11 million school bond was passed for the rapidly growing Vallivue School District with over 75 percent of the vote. The district will build a new elementary school and buy land for two more. District officials predict they will have to build a new elementary school every two years. Over 600 new students enrolled this fall in the district that has been growing by 9 percent a year.
- The city of Marsing is getting a new library. Ninety percent of voters in a recent bond election favored a 21-year, \$775,000 bond for a 4,700-square-foot facility that is scheduled to open in early 2008.
- Hampton Inn & Suites recently opened its newest hotel in southwestern Idaho at the BoDo development on Capital Boulevard. The facility has 186 rooms and is one of the larger Hampton Inn & Suites locations.
- The new XL Foods beef plant in Nampa is working its way up to processing 5,000 cattle a week with 400 hourly workers and nearly 100 salaried employees. The plant also does boning and special cutting of meat products. XL Foods plans to produce over \$300 million in meat a year at its Nampa plant.
- The Nampa Industrial Corp., which has been active in buying and selling land and recruiting businesses and attracting jobs to Nampa since 1949, will soon be disbanded. Other economic development organizations have moved to the forefront.
- The chief executive of SuperValu recently told community leaders that Boise will continue to be an important location for the company, citing the experience and hard work of Albertsons employees as the reason. The marketing and merchandising departments are being moved to Minneapolis where SuperValu is headquartered, and the information technology, finance, human resources, legal and real estate will remain in Boise.
- The region's latest ethnic food store recently opened in Meridian. British Thing in downtown Meridian stocks many of England's favorite foods such as baked beans and chocolate covered biscuit cookies.
- Boise-based Washington Group International is countering the notion that the construction industry has slowed. The company recently announced it would be adding 1,000 workers to its global work force of 25,000. About 30 of these jobs are expected to be located in Boise. Citing the best industry conditions in 30 years, Washington Group will be looking for workers in engineering, construction and management.
- Micron Technology has announced a hiring freeze affecting over 250 jobs listed on its Web site. Due to anticipated falling NAND product prices, Micron decided vacant positions would be left unfilled.
- Two more hospitals are entering the regional health care market. Ernest Health Inc. just broke

ground on a \$16 million, 40-bed long-term care facility near Bishop Kelly High School in Boise that will employ up to 180. A group of area investors plans to build a \$60 million, 120,000-square-foot, 50-bed hospital employing 230 in Boise to compete directly with St. Luke's Regional Medical Center and St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center.

- The Snake River Valley, stretching from southeastern Oregon to Twin Falls, has been designated an American Viticultural Area, enabling vintners to use the appellation Snake River Valley in promoting their wines. Idaho grape growers and wineries have been pursuing this designation for four years. According to the Idaho Grape Growers and Wine Producers Commission, Walla Walla, Wash., received a designation 10 years ago and has seen wineries balloon from a handful to over 300 generating \$3 billion a year in economic impact.

#### **ELMORE COUNTY**

- The Splendid Acres Water Association recently received one of the Department of Environmental Quality's low-interest loans to rebuild a drinking water system so it complies with state and federal drinking water standards. The \$170,000 loan must be repaid in 20 years at 3.25 percent interest.
- Alternative Energy Holdings Inc. has signed a \$20 million purchase agreement for 4,000 acres of farmland along the Snake River near Bruneau for a 1,500 megawatt nuclear power plant.
- American Legion Boulevard, the major link to Mountain Home from Interstate 84, will be resurfaced this summer for \$600,000, and new water lines will be installed along the roadway.

#### **PAYETTE COUNTY**

- Dickinson Frozen Foods of Fruitland is spending over \$6 million to upgrade its inventory control and management maintenance systems and automate several other procedures. The company, which also has a facility in Sugar City in eastern Idaho, hopes to increase productivity with its current staffing levels. Dickinson produces onion, pepper and potato products.
- The Independent Enterprise in Payette recently won the Inland Press Association's award for best non-daily newspaper with less than 5,000 circulation. The Independent Enterprise has been publishing newspapers for the last 109 years and plans to start a free Web site this summer.

- Energy West Corp. of Denver is leasing property throughout Payette County to set up test wells for companies interested in oil and natural gas exploration. Energy West said drilling for gas and oil could start in two years should the wells prove it viable.

#### **VALLEY COUNTY**

- The city of Donnelly has approved a rest stop just south of town on the east side of Highway 55. A Gem Community Grant from Idaho Commerce & Labor is being used to cover the \$104,000 cost. The rest stop will include a paved parking area, an information kiosk, restrooms and a minimal amount of RV parking.
- Tamarack Resort will be developing the Poison Creek campground near Lake Cascade adjacent to the main entrance to the Resort. The improved campground will include a new marina and a park on the lake and will be for public use with no preference given to resort guests. Tamarack will be responsible for maintenance of the park and marina after the improvements are made.
- The first three of nine affordable homes in McCall should be built by May. Each will sell for \$175,000. The homes, being built by Neighborhood Housing Services of Boise, are framed as modular sections and shipped to McCall from SMS Custom Builders in Pocatello.

#### **ADAMS COUNTY**

- Brundage Mountain Resort recently announced it will be adding two new chair lifts to the ski hill by mid-December. The resort is investing over \$3 million on the lifts, which will open up an additional 160 acres of the mountain to skiers. The new lifts will allow an additional 3,600 skiers an hour to use the mountain.

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